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SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Key Note Address

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Emotional quality of university students is a major concern for university authorities, parents and the society in general. In the recent past many unethical and violent incidences have happened in our universities. Students selected to Universities are intellectually smarter than the students admitted a decade ago, yet performance, behavior and the general outlook of university graduates do not show that. The recent educational research also indicates that. The 'Emotionally Smart' oppose to 'Intellectually Smart' is a topic in discussion. This convocational address to the graduating student is an important reminder that success does not depend on intellectual smartness alone, unless one is also 'emotionally smart.'

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE

By Upali M. Sedere PhD (Iowa)

The Hon. Chancellor, The Hon. Vice Chancellor, The Deans and Dons of Rajarata University, The Graduates, Distinguish Guests, Parents and Friends.

I am greatly honoured by your invitation to address this 6th convocation of Rajarata University. A university for Rajarat was a long overdue finally fulfilled. I express my sincere thanks to those who initiated and worked towards the establishment of this university.

Today is an important day for all of us because it is the graduation day of the 6th batch of students from Rajarata University. After three to four years of studying, a set of fortunate young intellectuals reaching one of their ambitions and stepping out to the world of work.

At this important occasion, I wish to enlighten the new graduates on one important aspect of life that really contributes to the success or failure of your life. I wish to talk to you about **‘Emotional Intelligence’ (EQ)**. It would have been better if this was told to you years before, and together with your parents and teachers if could have worked from your primary school to endure your success. This knowledge was not available to us to the extent it is today. Every day we learn new things and research brings new knowledge to us. I certainly believe if my teachers had this knowledge then they would have made me a better person to achieve much more than what I have achieved today. It is important for these young graduates to understand emotional competence for your own progress.

Let me first give you a little bit of background to this development.

Intelligence (IQ) and Intellectually Smart:

It was during the First World War the concept of assessment of intelligence became so important because the selection of large numbers to serve the army was an urgent requirement. Not all were smart to become a soldier or an officer. It was found that some soldiers were stupid and clumsy and was not intelligent enough to be mobilized to fight the enemy. To get smart ones recruited to the army, intelligence and intelligence testing became important. Binet (1905) was the first psychologist who developed an intelligence test and since then assessment of intelligence became so important. We all believed that **intelligence (IQ)** is the most important thing to become a successful person. Many theories developed to explain and understand intelligence – Terman (1916), Wechsler (1955) Gilford (1956) , Piaget (1951) were some of the leading psychologist did more work on intelligence, intellectual development and intellectual testing.

Person with a high IQ was considered superior. Therefore, **‘Intellectual superiority’** was taken as the key variable in screening and selecting persons for jobs, higher education etc. All education systems and examinations were prepared to assess intellectual ability. Selecting the better ones on the basis how intelligently one would handle various subject matters. Selection to higher levels of education; primary to secondary; and secondary to universities followed the same ideology. The universities and all educational institutes for various competitive selections used intelligence tests as a criterion. University is considered the place where all intellectuals teach and future intellectuals learn. Intelligence tests were designed to identify the most intelligent persons. Various types of intelligences were assessed with multiple test batteries. Then the achievement tests were prepared using the same principles to assess student’s capacity to deal with various academic subject matters. In

1951, a committee of experts, leading psychologists and education experts, met in Chicago and studied the 'objectives of education; and identified three particular domains that education should concentrate in developing the younger generation. These experts identified three important domains for personal development and those were: the **Cognitive Domain**, which is nothing but the development of intellectual ability; **Affective Domain** which referred to development of personal qualities; and **Psychomotor Domain** referring to the development of motor coordination skills. They went beyond that and formed three sub-committees to spell out the details of each of the three domains. Bloom (1956) chaired the working committee on Cognitive domain where they spelled out the hierarchical order of the intellectual abilities. Bloom et al listed six intellectual constructs as *Knowledge, Comprehension, Application, Analysis, Synthesis and Evaluation* and even went into further details of specifying even subcategories. These helped a lot to understand how the intellectual ability can be developed. A second committee headed by Krathwol (1956) analyzed the Affective qualities and identified six categories and many sub categories. The five main categories were *Receiving, Responding, Valuing, Organization, and Characterization*. These illustrated how the affective qualities develop and internalize in personal development. Although the classification was available the educators never used it to the extent that it should have been used because every one believed more in the intellectual development than the affective development. The third committee never completed the task and many other scholars presented various classifications on Psychomotor Domain. Simpson's (1966) classification was one which received more acceptances. He identified five categories as *Perception, Set, Guided Response, Mechanism, and Complex Responses*. These were hardly used in academic education because motor skills had very little recognition and importance in general education.

This knowledge was there for the last 50 years. The educators world over, used these classifications to develop textbooks, learning material and examinations to make the students more competent and intellectually smart. In Sri Lanka, our university entrance exams were developed along these lines and university simply look at the test scores to select students because a good test score is believed to indicate who is intelligent and/or intellectually promising to receive higher education. Selection for various jobs used intelligence tests to identify the smart ones. Testing was considered the best and the most fair way of selecting a person for entry to institutions and jobs.

Generally, the more educated were considered the more intelligent and smart ones than those were less educated. No doubt, intelligence is still an important capacity that makes a person smart. However, after many years of studies and analysis of experiences in the recent years it is found that there is a more important dimension of life, for one to become 'Smart' and successful in life. Some of the most prestigious universities like Harvard and Yale universities kept records of the brilliant students. They have given them various types of tests and assessed their intelligence and personality and did some tracking of their progress and success achieved over a longer period. ***It was found that 'Intellectually Smart' ones were not necessarily the most successful ones in their jobs and life. This triggered the new thinking and 'Emotional Intelligence', a new dimension of life came into light.***

Emotional Intelligence (EQ):

It was **Daniel Goleman** (1998) a Professor of Harvard University published his book on '**Emotional Intelligence**' (EQ) in 1998 with interesting arguments and evidence and that has contributed to a wave of new development at all levels; schools, universities and institutions. Goleman talked about '**Emotionally Smart**' is more important than '**Intellectually**

Smart’. Goleman cited **‘Limits of IQ’** showing evidence to others that how some of the highly intelligent people have derailed in their professional and personal lives. Goleman gives many examples as evidence.

A student, who entered Yale University with the highest entry score, in fact a perfect score at university entrance, took ten years to graduate. As I was reading this I remember when I was a teacher at Peradeniya University, consecutively two years, some of the students who were admitted with the highest scores at GCE (A/L) to the Faculty of Engineering did fail their first examination. In my short career as a teacher serving at St. Sylvester’s College, Kandy, I remember one of my 6th grade students passed the “Navodaya Scholarship’ and parents admitted him to the most prestigious school in Sri Lanka, the Royal College, Colombo. After a few years I inquired about this student and found out that he couldn’t pursue his studies well and his class mates who remained in the same schools told me that he didn’t even do well at his GCE (O/L), where as some of his classmates who remained at St. Sylvester’s college, who also passed the scholarship exam, not so intellectually smart, successfully pursued studies and several of them entered the medical school and are now serving as reputed medical practitioners. I also remember in my university batch (1965) 17 of our batch mates joined the Police Service as ASPs. Personally I knew all of them and also remember their intellectual nature and emotional nature. One of my closest friends was amongst them and he was a very honest and committed person was also intellectually smart, so were the other 16 ASPs. But my friend had less self control and was less empathetic. When he joined the Police service he tried to discipline the subordinate police officers without empathizing with their problems. He never listened to the problems of the subordinate officers. He blamed them more than understanding them and often he punished them. After a few years he was murdered inside his office by one of the Police Constable. Whereas my other friends who were much more emotionally smarter had brilliant careers and most of them retired as Senior DIGs. I am sure each and every one of us can tell more such stories to support Goleman’s theory.

Goleman’s argument is widely accepted by teachers and educators because worldwide we all have sufficient evidence to say intelligence alone has not made intelligent people successful in their studies, jobs, and personal life.

Goleman also gave evidence to show how another very intelligent under-graduate with his emotional maturity progressed well to become one of the best and successful professors at a prestigious university. How come it is that two intellectually smart persons after studying in the same prestigious university, under the same teachers; one became a world’s most prestigious professors and excel at the top, while the other ,in fact the one who had a higher IQ could not make the same progress? The difference was that the one who failed to reach the highest levels, was very arrogant, disrespectful to his colleagues and peers, never could work in a team, was functioning in isolation, not friendly and was suffering from of complexes. Those hindered his progress. The one who was successful was a fine listener, fine team player, very cooperative, sympathetic and respected and empathizing with others. He was always wanted by others and liked by others. He excelled because over and above his intellectual smartness he was also emotionally smart.

Goleman pointed out that another important aspect and illustrated how the so called **‘Experts’ the best educated have fared in their life.** He demonstrated with evidence that just because you are educated and got university degrees that does not bring success in life or in your profession. It is true these degrees and first classes best correlates with intelligence. Yet, many graduates, technical experts with all their knowledge do not do well in life and at

work. They are called experts and join reputed institutions but have derailed in their careers. If intelligence and degrees are so assuring factors of success, all PhDs, MScs and BScs should be the best performers in the world. Shouldn't it be? The truth is so far from that. He pointed out that **'Emotionally Smart'** is what matters the most for success in life, success in job, success at home and family. **A person who is intellectually smart as well as emotionally smart is the one who achieves success.** One who has average intelligence and yet 'Emotionally Smart' had done even better than the ones who were 'Intellectually Smart' but 'Emotionally Less-smart'. The recent research studies strongly support this theory of EQ.

Over the last decade 'average intelligence' of students has increased by 24 points; in a scale running from 50 – 150 with an average of 100; 24 points is a significant increase. This is true for our universities as well. More competitive the admissions to universities we admit students with higher scores than before and tend to have students with a higher intelligence level than before. The increase in average intelligence score is due to many reasons, some train to increase IQ, children have better nutrition, parents are more educated and support children better, children use computerized games based on intellectual abilities, subject specialists use these principles in developing learning material and all these strengthen intellectual skills.

Goleman says that yet, **there is a dangerous paradox at work. They grow ever smarter in intelligence there emotional intelligence is on the decline** (Goleman 1998). The result comes from a massive survey of parents and teachers. The survey indicated that children are more aggressive and impulsive than before, more angry and unruly, more lonely and depressed. The level of social unrest has increased. Violence at universities and schools has increased. Many of these intelligent students are emotionally and socially immature and disturbed. Thomas Achenbach of University of Vermont, a Psychologist who did extensive studies says this change is world wide. The rate of crime, alienation, violence, depressions, unwanted pregnancies, bullying, suicides, murders, and dropping out of school and work has increased amongst the youth because they are emotionally less-smart. Most of the student activists in our universities are emotionally imbalanced. They may be intellectually smart but emotionally not smart. If they learn to balance their emotions, or if we could have trained them in their early years at school and home to be 'Emotionally Smart', they could have been really successful in their studies, work and life.

What is Emotionally Smart Means?

An emotional competence is a learned capacity based on emotional intelligence that results in outstanding performance at work". Goldman says that emotional intelligence determines our potential for learning practical skills that are based on five elements: **Self Awareness, Motivation, Self-regulation, Empathy and Adeptness in Relationships.** **Our emotional competence shows how much of that potential we have translated into on-the-job capabilities.** Simply being high on emotional intelligence does not guarantee a person will have learned emotional competencies to become emotionally smart.

Emotional Competencies:

According to Goleman there are twenty five emotional competencies. These are grouped under five dimensions to two larger groups. The two larger groups are identified as **'Personal Competencies'** and **'Social Competencies'**. Therefore, 'Emotionally Smart' means the person has to understand emotions of the self, your own emotions. The other is the person has to learn to express emotion with 'Social Competence'. This means how one relates with the others.

Both 'self awareness' and 'how to relate emotions in a social context' are equally important because if one cannot understand his or her own emotional nature there is no way that one can be smart because smartness comes with the understanding of your own emotions and the ability to control emotions in a social context.

If one understands his or her emotions then that enables the person to regulate emotions. The awareness is a self assessment. One who loses temper should know that nature. One who is weak in interpersonal relations should know that he or she is weak in that behaviour. This self awareness process helps at the next stage to regulate emotions. Regulate means control and manipulate an emotion in a constructive way. Emotions are usually destructive. Regulating means make them constructive. The person who understands his /her emotions can learn to regulate but to be emotionally smart one has to relate the regulated emotion with that of motivation and social competence.

Motivation is the tendency that guides the person to achieve goals and objectives. One's drive for work, initiative, commitment and optimism relates to motivation. If emotions are regulated and convert to a drive the individual is motivated to achieve success. It is important for you to understand your emotions that are destructive. If you are emotionally smart you should be able to regulate them, control them and then direct those to a constructive drive to achieve goals and objectives. This makes the person emotionally smart. This brings success at work. Those who are 'Intellectually Smart' but 'Emotionally Retarded' cannot achieve their goals and objectives, they derail and fail in whatever the path they try to advance. Such people end up as psychologically disturbed and trouble makers. The one who has understood emotions, learn to regulate and direct them to constructive motives, even with an average intelligence will do well in life. If you are intellectually and emotionally smart then you are bound to achieve success in your job, home and family.

The other very important step of emotional smartness is the social aspect. The most important of these is empathy, awareness of others feelings and concerns. Understanding feelings of others is important for one to achieve success in all spheres of life. All human beings are social beings. When one develops empathy naturally in return you cultivate a friendly atmosphere and develop trust. This facilitates socialization. Social skills are very important in career success. The global economy itself demands a very high level of social skills. One must learn to be a collaborator and contributor with cooperative attitudes. Present day work places expect you to be a team player. Goleman gives many examples to show how some of the top Managers have lost their jobs simply because they were not team players.

Cary Cherniss (2001) clearly indicated that Emotional intelligence influences organizational effectiveness in a number of areas:

- Employee recruitment and retention
- Development of talent
- Teamwork
- Employee commitment, morale, and health
- Innovation
- Productivity
- Efficiency
- Sales
- Revenues

- Quality of service
- Customer loyalty
- Client or student outcomes

What skills do bosses need? The most effective bosses are those who have the ability to sense how their employees feel about their work situation and to intervene effectively when those employees begin to feel discouraged or dissatisfied. Effective bosses are also able to manage their own emotions, with the result that employees trust them and feel good about working with them. In short, bosses whose employees stay are bosses who manage with emotional intelligence.

There are many personalities that we all know who have had only very little education but have done so well in their life. There is much to learn from them because they are smarter than the so called intellectuals, so called experts and the educated, who are intellectually smarter but emotionally less smart.

We all who are gathered here are intelligent people. It is important for us to understand some of the principles governing life. The human being is a social being. Intrinsically, home, schools, universities and workplace and the society that we live are social places. From the time of birth to the last day of death we live with people and continue to learn. **Learning is a social process.** We do not learn anything alone. Students do not learn alone but rather in collaboration with their teachers, in the company of their peers, and with the support of their families. In the course of our association emotionally and intellectually we have to be smart to be successful.

The parents of each and every one of these graduates had been making all sacrifices to see that their children complete university education to become learned men and women. You and your parents are happy that you graduated. In the recent years some students who entered our universities, not Rajarata, have had an unfortunate ending. There had been incidences in some universities that a fellow student was murdered by their own peers. As parents, decent citizens and a university graduate; you need to raise your eye brows and ask, how come in a university, the place where the student who were called 'the cream of the crop' with highest marks to receive free university education, 'the intellectually smart' students have murdered their fellow brothers in cold blood in a most uncivilized and brutal manner. The university students with acclaimed high intelligence have been the most violent, most destructive elements in society setting a sad and bad example to those younger children in schools who look at his or her own educated older brother and older sisters of their country to aspire themselves to be a successful adult. Have you lived up to it? This is where the 'Emotional Smartness' is seriously lacking in our 'Intellectually Smart' students. These show that our schools and universities together with our children and parents need to work on emotional intelligence. Unfortunately, emotions cannot be changed or cultivated much once you pass a certain age. It could be better done, when children are young.

There is no doubt in my mind that Goleman is right. Simply one being 'Intellectually Smart' he or she is not the right one to select for higher education or for a higher level job. Universities need to select students not only based on academic test scores but also on an assessment of their emotional intelligence. We need to introduce these new assessments. I request the distinguish university Deans and Dons who are present here to take this forward. That will keep the emotionally unfit students out of higher learning institutions and allow students who are qualified, 'intellectually smart', and 'emotionally smart' to profit from

education. When emotionally imbalanced students are taken to these institutions, unfortunately when such become student leaders, eventually becomes the politicians in this country, the nation seriously suffers. Because the leaders are not 'emotionally smart' to maintain peace, negotiate peace, maintain stability and empathize with the fellow citizens. The nation is in a great need of 'emotionally, socially and intellectually smart people' to govern our nation.

You leave this institution today. In another 20 years, it is your sons and daughters who will seek admission to these institutions. That's the day that many of you will realize how misleading were some of the student activities in your university years. That's the day that you really retrospect on your university days and tell your sons and daughters what to do and what not to do when they get to a university. It is important for all of you to understand that your child has to be trained to be intellectually and emotionally smart.

"EQ is the set of abilities that helps us get along in life with other people in all kinds of life situations. It is the "missing piece" in education -- (Maurice Elias, Rutgers University Professor of Psychology).

My earnest request to all these new graduates is that you should strive to work hard to become emotionally smart. You are already intellectually smart; your success depends on how well you train your emotions, and demonstrates your emotional smartness with self control of emotions and effective socialization with your bosses and subordinates.

I wish you all success in life and to become emotionally smart people.

References:

- Goleman Daniel (1998), Emotional Intelligence: Working With Emotional Intelligence, Bantam books
- Cary Cherniss (2001), The Emotionally Intelligent Workplace, [www//Emotional Intelligence/Cherniss](http://www Emotional Intelligence/Cherniss)